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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Identical letters dated 30 April 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

As the peace process remains suspended, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continues to deteriorate, with mounting hardship and suffering for the Palestinian civilian population as a result of the oppressive, illegal policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power. This has included Israel's acceleration of illegal and provocative colonization measures aimed solely at creating even more facts on the ground, at intensifying pressure on the Palestinian population, leading in many cases to the forced displacement of inhabitants for sheer survival, and at solidifying its control over the Palestinian territory. Such illegal Israeli practices have been especially concentrated in key areas in and around Occupied East Jerusalem.

Since the Annapolis Conference of November 2007, Israel's illegal settlement activities have markedly escalated, making the past 17 months the worst recorded in terms of the occupying Power's flagrant and systematic violation of the relevant provisions of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, and relevant United Nations resolutions on this critical matter. Egregious violations continue apace as the new Israeli Government has publicly declared its support for and is actively pursuing advancement of settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this connection, the occupying Power continues to pursue measures such as the so-called "E-1 plan" involving massive settlement construction and expansion and home demolitions — with at least 1,100 demolition orders served against Palestinian-owned buildings in Occupied East Jerusalem since the beginning of this year — clearly aimed at de-populating East Jerusalem of its indigenous Palestinian inhabitants while at the same time promoting the Judaization of the City.

Most recently, on 26 April 2009, the occupying Power approved the illegal confiscation of 12,000 dunums of Palestinian land to facilitate the construction of 6,000 new housing units in the illegal Israeli settlement of "Maale Adumim".

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Already comprising at least 1 per cent of West Bank land, "Maale Adumim" constitutes the second largest Israeli settlement and creates a "belt" around East Jerusalem, severing it from its natural Palestinian environs. This latest land confiscation is part of the "E-1 plan", which aims at entrenching and finalizing the eastern front of Israel's settlement in and around East Jerusalem and the complete isolation of the city from the rest of the West Bank.

As we have repeatedly done in the past, we once again vociferously caution against the real dangers that the continued pursuit of this unlawful plan poses for the two-State solution for peace. This plan is currently at the core of Israel's illegal colonization campaign, involving, inter alia, the settlements, the Wall, the bypass roads, home demolitions and numerous other measures, which has deliberately and illegally sought to alter the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian Territory, particularly East Jerusalem, has seriously undermined the Territory's contiguity, integrity, unity and viability, and represents a grave threat to realization of the two-State solution.

Alarmingly, it is not only this plan that Israel, the occupying Power, continues to recklessly pursue. Countless other illegal settlement activities and measures also continue to be carried out throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which are destroying the land, heightening tensions, instability and frustrations, destroying Palestinian socio-economic life, and gravely jeopardizing the prospects for peace. Announcements about settlement expansion and the construction of hundreds upon hundreds of new units as well as more land confiscations are regularly declared under various pretexts and guises in blatant defiance of international law, United Nations resolutions and Israel's own obligations under the Road Map and other commitments made.

Settler lawlessness has also escalated, facilitated and fomented by the occupying Power, which is responsible for the presence and arming of the settlers and allows their repeated and escalating acts of terror, destruction and intimidation against the Palestinian people to go unpunished. Indeed, the new Israeli Government's openly hostile policies towards Palestinian rights, property and aspirations have only further emboldened the hostility and fanaticism of the settler population towards the Palestinian people. The most recent such incident, on 27 April 2009, involved the shooting and serious injury of 18-year-old Mohammad Naim Faraj by armed Israeli settlers from the illegal settlement of "Yitzhar" near Nablus as Israeli soldiers looked on.

Israel's continuation of such illegal policies and practices, in addition to its continuing illegal and inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip and the immeasurable suffering and trauma it is inflicting on the 1.5 million civilians imprisoned there, constitutes yet further irrefutable evidence of the occupying Power's abject disregard for international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, as well as its rejection of the legitimate, inalienable and internationally recognized rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and freedom in their homeland. Such destructive policies and practices are also in direct violation of Israel's clear legal obligations as an occupying Power as well as under relevant Security Council resolutions.

The current situation is untenable and tensions continue to rise. If left unchecked, such illegal Israeli actions will deal a severe, if not fatal, blow to the prospects for peace on the basis of the two-State solution and will further destabilize

the region as they challenge the morals and principles of the international community as a whole, not just the Palestinian nation. The Palestinian people and their leadership thus continue to look to the international community, including the Security Council, to uphold their responsibilities and obligations in this regard and to take urgent action to bring an end to this unlawful situation, ultimately aimed at bringing an end to this belligerent, nearly 42-ye... military occupation and allowing the independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, to take its rightful place and live in peace and security among the community of nations.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 178 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 16 April 2009 (A/ES-10/453-S/2009/209), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of those war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Fayiz **Abdelhady-Nasser**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.